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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/MAG AND OES

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TBIO PGOV PHUM LY
SUBJECT: LIBYA: INFECTIOUS DISEASES WORKSHOP ATTEMPTS TO INJECT PROFESSIONALISM INTO HIV/AIDS DEBATE

11. SUMMARY. On May 4-7 the Libyan National Center for Infectious Diseases Protection and Control (NCIDCP) held the first-ever Infectious and Endemic Diseases Scientific Conference in Tripoli, which included two sessions on HIV/AIDS in Libya. Most conference discussions were not highly technical, but the conference was well-attended by roughly 100-150 mostly Libyan health professionals and others. END SUMMARY.

HIV/AIDS Roundtable Well Attended

12. Of the two conference sessions focused on HIV/AIDS, a roundtable discussion on when and how to react to the "HIV Epidemic in Libya" was by far the best attended, with more than 60 people, mostly Libyans, participating. The attimes heated discussion noted that mortality resulting from HIV/AIDS is increasing and focused on what needs to be done to stop the infection rate, including methods of prevention, treatment, and increasing education and awareness about the disease. While the UK-based moderators aimed to discuss a national plan of action, the session was highly unstructured and served to give participants a venue to voice any and all thoughts relating to HIV/AIDS, including views on the Bulgarian medics court case.

Intravenous Drug Use Identified As Primary Risk Factor Among Libyans

- 13. The more technical conference session, including a presentation from Al-Fateh University on the epidemiology of the HIV infection in Libya, was not as widely attended, with roughly 25 Libyans in the audience. The Faculty of Medicine of Tripoli's Al-Fateh University presented research conducted on 360 HIV patients receiving out-patient care at NCIDCP. Intravenous drug usage was found to be the primary risk factor in contracting HIV in Libya. Of the patients studied, 87 percent were males from 21-40 years of age. The study found that 89 percent of the 360 patients were tobacco smokers, 52 percent hashish smokers, and 45 percent of patients reported alcoholism. The research group concluded that social work is essential to HIV/AIDS patient care and should be implemented in Libyan hospitals.
- $\underline{\ }$ 4. NCIDCP's new website can be found at www.nidcc-idsc.org.
- 15. COMMENT. Aside from presentations on HIV/AIDS, the conference put on sessions related to practices of hygiene and sterilization in hospitals, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and avian influenza. The conference included a modest exhibition of medical equipment and a side workshop on human infectious disease surveillance put on by visiting Trilateral Steering and Cooperation Committee's Bio SubCommittee members (US, UK, and Libya). While conference proceedings were not highly-technical or well-attended outside of the Libyan health community, it was a professional first attempt at openly addressing issues of public health. END COMMENT.

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